COMPLETE NINTENDO SWITCH LAUNCH GUIDE

PREVIEW

MARIO KART 8 DELUXE

SECRETS

FINAL FANTASY XV

RESIDENT EVIL VII



THE LATEST NEWS, REVIEWS, PREVIEWS, AND PLAYING TIPS INSIDE!

ISSUE

ANDROMEDA

A WHOLE NEW GALAXY AWAITS

INJUSTICE2

EVERY BATTLE DEFINES YOU











ULTIMATE EDITION INCLUDES P DLC FIGHTERS

AND 3 PREMIER SKINS

TRANSFORM FLASH, GREEN LANTERN, AND SUPERGIRL INTO ALTERNATE CHARACTERS WITH NEW LOOKS, VOICES, AND DIALOGUE







PLUS 2 EXCLUSIVE GEAR SHADER PACKS

CUSTOMIZE THE LOOK OF YOUR ROSTER WITH THE DESTROYER AND DEFENDER SHADER PACKS



AVAILABLE

5.16.17

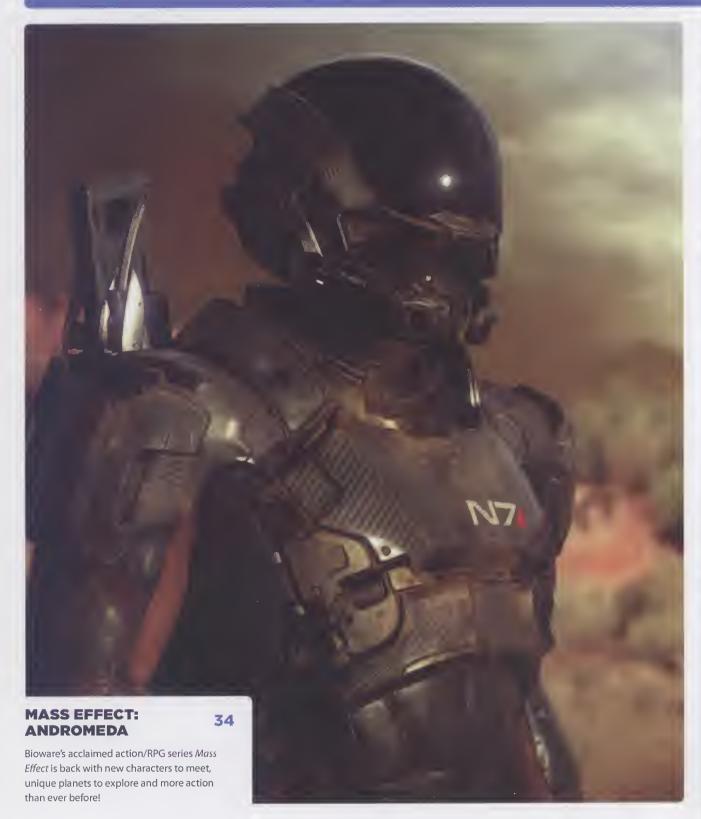








Game center CONTENTS





SECTIONS

EDITORIAL 06

GAME ON OS

5 TO PLAY

10 SECRETS 24

STRATEGY CENTER 46

PARTING SHOTS 5



MARIO KART 8 DELUXE 40

Racing onto the Nintendo Switch, *Mario Kart* 8 *Delux*e features an enhanced version of the game, complete with all its DLC.

PERSONA 5

Discover the stylish world of fighting Shadows in our preview for *Persona 5*, which Atlus promises is its biggest and boldest RPG yet!

42

43

INJUSTICE 2

The DC Universe clashes once more in this second installment of the fan-favorite fighting series. Find out what's new inside!

REVIEW

RESIDENT EVIL 7 BIOHAZARD

Resident Evil returns to its storied roots with a new survival/horror game that truly brings back the horror.







FROM THE EDITOR



TIME TO SWITCH THINGS UP

othing excites us more than new video game hardware. New consoles offer developers an opportunity to innovate and create new interactive experiences.

Now, we are right around the corner from one of the most exciting system launches in a long time: the debut of the Nintendo Switch on March 3.

For the first time, you can seamlessly jump from playing on your big-screen TV to gaming on the go with the included high-resolution touch screen. Your controllers adapt too, attaching to the sides of the screen to make a self-contained handheld. Or, use the screen's attached kickstand while you and a friend each grab a controller and play together.

Up to eight Switch consoles can connect wirelessly for an intense local tournament, or jump online to face opponents around the world.

The Switch is easily Nintendo's most ambitious project. You'll find its origins inside the Wii and Wii U consoles: motion controls, NFC integration for ammibos and a touchscreen controller that can play games away from the television, albeit only about 30 feet away from its host console.

The company has always marched to its own drum. While the competition fights over which company can produce the highest-

resolution graphics and the most impressive frame rate, Nintendo is more concerned with providing new and exciting ways to play.

Players can expect to play the most beloved Nintendo franchises. The long-awaited The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild also launches on March 3, and the coming months will see Mario Kart 8 Deluxe, Splatoon 2 and Super Mario Odyssey.

That's not all, though. Thanks to its versatility, the Switch has attracted a stellar lineup of third-party developers. Fans can look forward to games like *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, marking the first time the series has appeared on a Nintendo console, and *FIFA 18*, welcoming the long-absent EA Sports back to a Nintendo console.

Those who have lamented the dearth of good Nintendo games can smile, knowing the drought is almost over. Nintendo games are about to rain over the land once again.

The launch of the Nintendo Switch is just the first big gaming event of 2017. Keep checking the free print and digital editions of Walmart GameCenter magazine every month throughout the year. That's where you'll find the latest news to keep you informed and at the center of everything gaming.

MARC CAMRON

EDITOR



Publisher / Editor-In-Chief

Steve B. Harris

Editorial

EDITOR
Marc Camron
NEWS EDITOR
Mollie L Patterson
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Ray Carsillo
Josh Harmon

Contributors

Victoria A.F. Camron

Matt Cabral Paul Semel Emma Schaefer Matt Buchholtz Quartermann

Art Direction

Michael Hobbs Michael Stassus

EGM Media, LLC

8840 Wilshire 8lvd. Third Floor 8everly Hills, CA 90211 www.egmmediagroup.com

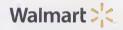
PRESIDENT Steve Harris
ASSTTO THE PRESIDENT Angela Adams
LEGAL Bob Wyman
ACCOUNTING Oz Abregov

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES gamecenter@egmnow.net

Advertising

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Jeff Eisenberg ADVERTISING MANAGER Elizabeth Scott

FOR AOVERTISING INQUIRIES 800-87S-6298, ext. 120 adsales@egmnow.net



© Copyright 2017, EGM Media, LLC, all rights reserved. WALMART GAMECENTER MAGAZINE (ISSN 2164-7569) is published monthly by EGM Media, LLC, 8840 Wilshire Bivd., 3rd Floor, Beverly Hills, CA 90211. Subscriptions for 6 issues are \$14.99 tlS. In Canada, please add \$10.00 US. International orders outside US and Canada, please add \$30 per year for surface mail, U.S. funds only. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to EGM Media, 8840 Wilshire Bivd., 3rd Floor, Beverly Hills, CA 90211. For subscription service questions, address changes, or to order, please contact us at gamecenter@egmnow.net (for customers service) or at http://www.egmnow.com/gamecenter (to order). Please allow 8-12 weeks from sale before receiving your first issue as well as for any subscription changes to take place on an existing subscription account. We sometimes make lists of our customers available to mailers of goods and services that may interest you. If you do not wish to receive such mailings please write to us at: EGM Media, LLC, 8840 Wilshire Bivd., 3rd Floor, Beverly Hills, CA 90211. The editors and the publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. Without limiting the rights under copyrights reserved herein, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in, or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written notice of EGM Media, LLC. The Walmart names and logos and all related produced and service manes, design marks and slogosas are the trademarks or service marks of Walmart Stores, inc. All other marks are the property of their respective companies. All materials listed in this magazine are subject to manufacturers' changes and colleges contact FGM Media, LLC's Biobts and Permissions Manager at nermissions was entered in mark and subject to marks of without express written permission of EGM Media, LLC's Biobts and Permissions Manager at nermissions was provided and services.







Blood
Drug Reference
Parfial Nudity
Sexual Themes
Strong Language
Violence

Online Interactions Not Rated by the ESRB

LUS.COM/PERSONA5

ATLUS. SEGA. All hights reserved. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.
The PS* Family logo and "PS3" are registered trademarks and "PS4" is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment inc.

ATLUS

GAMEON

GAMING NEWS, NUMBERS & GOSSIP

BY GAMECENTER STAFF

MARVEL, SQUARE ENIX TEAM UP TO CREATE A NEW GENERATION OF SUPERHERO GAMES

eam-ups between unlikely allies are a staple of Marvel's superhero movies and comics, but now the company itself is part of an unexpected duo — one that is playing out in real life.

While plenty of developers have crafted games based on Marvel properties through the years, the creators of Iron Man and Captain America are now working with the folks at Square Enix for a multi-year, multi-game agreement. By tapping a developer not usually

known for making games featuring superheroes, this deal promises some interesting new possibilities for what can be done with Marvel's characters.

As part of the announcement, we were given a tease for the first results of this new deal: an original game based around The Avengers. While the project's finer details haven't been revealed yet, we do know that it's being worked on by *Tomb Raider* developer Crystal Dynamics, and that it "will introduce a

universe gamers can play in for years to come," according to Marvel and Square Enix.

"The Avengers project is a perfect example of how Marvel is making games a key part of the landscape for Marvel storytelling, alongside comics, television and film," said Jay Ong, senior vice president of games and innovation at Marvel Entertainment. "We can only do this by matching our greatest Super Heroes with the world's top developers, such as the creative minds at Square Enix."

"Marvel's diverse, innovative universe has created millions of longtime fans, including all of us," said Phil Rogers, CEO of Square Enix Americas and Europe. "It's exciting to bring together Square Enix's award-winning development studios with Marvel's extraordinary storytellers to establish a new entertainment powerhouse."

Unfortunately, it seems we'll have to wait a while to find out more about this exciting new partnership, and more details on what's being worked on aren't due until 2018. If we can make at least one suggestion to Marvel and Square Enix, however, we'll end things with these simple words: Cloud Strife as Nick Fury's newest recruit.



BY THE **NUMBERS**

25 Million Registered players for Blizzard's team-based shooter *Overwatch*

3 Hours Roughly how long the Switch will be able to play *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* in portable mode, according to Nintendo

31 Number of fighters that will be on *Injustice* 2's roster at launch

120 New level cap for *Final Fantasy XV*, thanks to the game's latest update

10,000 Number of top players tracked by *Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare's* new leaderboards



biohazard

FEAR COMES HOME

AVAILABLE NOW



PlayStation VR XBOXONE CAPCOMS



GAMING NEWS, NUMBERS, & GOSSIP

Walmart's **TOP SELLERS**

This Month's Top-Selling Video Games ...

- CALL OF DUTY: INFINITE WARFARE ACTIVISION / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
- GRANO THEFT AUTO V 02 ROCKSTAR GAMES / XROX ONE PS4 XBOX 360, PS3, PC
- NBA 2K17 03 2K / XB0X ONE, PS4, XB0X 360.
- MADDEN NEL 12 04 EA/XBOX ONE, PS4, XBOX 360,
- RESIDENT EVIL 7 BIOHAZARD 05 CAPCOM / YROY ONE PSA
- **BATTLEFIELO 1** 06 EA / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
- FIFA 12 07 EA/XBOX ONE, PS4, XBOX 360,
- **ELDER SCROLLS V:** 08 SKYRIM SPECIAL EDITION BETHESOA / XBOX ONE, PS4
- WATCH DOGS 2 09 UBISOFT / XBOX ONE, PS4
- KIGDOM HEARTS 2.B FINAL CHAPTER 10 SOLIARE ENIX / PS4



CONTROL BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN XBOX GAMERS AND PC GAMERS AT LAST

It wasn't so long ago that the idea of letting players on consoles and PCs compete against one another online was taboo. Even beyond the technical differences between the platforms when it came to resolution or framerate. it was feared that the specific control options on one side or the other might give certain players an unfair advantage.

In recent years, however, developers have been working harder at trying to bridge the gap and bring more players together, and it seems that's one important piece of Microsoft's efforts in gaming going forward.

Thanks to a recent playlist added to Gears of War 4, fans of the series on both the Xbox One and Windows 10 are now able to compete against one another in battles that have turned out to be pretty balanced so far. In

addition, a few other titles slated for 2017 have been confirmed to offer cross-platform play between the two, including Gwent, the card game derived from the game-within-a-game of the same name in The Witcher 3, as well as the much-anticipated Crackdown 3.

Even better, Phil Spencer, the head of Microsoft's Xbox division, has promised fans that these are just the start of such efforts. When asked recently if more games would be featuring cross-platform play, Spencer responded that it's his team's goal to expand support, and that he sees it as "a good feature."

Now, there's just one question left: Will those daring developers pushing for crossplatform play between the Xbox One and PlayStation 4 ever see their dream fulfilled? We certainly hope so.

Walmart > !< RELEASE CALENDAR

All the great new games on the way to Walmart and Walmart.com

NINTENDO SWITCH NINTENDO / SWITCH

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: **BREATH OF THE WILD** NINTENDO / SWITCH

1-2-SWITCH NINTENDO / SWITCH **JUST DANCE 2017** UBISDET / SWITCH

SKYLANDERS IMAGINATORS ACTIVISION / SWITCH

SUPER BOMBERMAN R KONAMI/SWITCH

TDM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON WILDLANDS UBISOFT / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

THE BINOING OF ISAAC: REBIRTH NICALIS / SWITCH

MASS EFFECT ANDROMEDA EA / PS4, XBOX ONE, PC

KINGOOM HEARTS HD 1.5 + 2.5 REMIX SOUARE ENIX / PS4

MLR THE SHOW 12 SCEA/PS4

PERSONA 5 ATLUS / PS4, PS3

03

28

SNIPER: GHOST WARRIOR 3 CI GAMES / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

YOOKA-LAYLEE 07 TEAM17 / PS4, XBOX ONE, PC

> DRAGON QUEST HEROES II SQUARE ENIX / PS4

MARIO KART B DELUXE NINTENDO / SWITCH

BETHESOA SOFTWORKS / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC



















GAMING GOSSIP

COMPILED BY QUARTERMANN



HALF LIFE 3-ISH; MASS EFFECT ADVICE; QUESTIONING THE DIVISION

Welcome back stalwart readers! The time has come once again for your ever-faithful Ouartermann to tease you with tales of what's to come ... During the period of one week late last year, the O-mann got to play two games he never thought he'd actually see exist in physical form: Finol Fontosy XV and The Lost Guardion. With that duo knocked out, the "lost to development chaos" list is looking might empty these days - save for its starring member, still nowhere to be seen. Yes, I'm talking Holf-Life 3. So too was Valve's head honcho Gabe Newell (in a way) recently. The president and co-founder of the famed studio took to Reddit to field fans' questions recently, and a few of his answers were short but sweet. When asked if Valve was working on any "fully fledged single-player games," his reply was a simple "yes." And then, when a daring soul asked specifically about a new project in the "Half-Life/Portal universe," Newell offered a tantalizing "yep." Now, given talk I've heard going around that the most-wanted sequel in the world has been bogged down due to an ever-changing focus, I'm not so sure that we're going to be seeing the game that everyone is hoping for. What if, however, it was instead something connecting to the world yet walking its own new path? Because, really, what's the best way to avoid disappointment in Holf-Life 3? Don't call it Holf-Life 3 ... Meanwhile, one highly anticipated game that'll be in our grubby little hands sooner rather than later is Moss Effect: Andromedo. It features beautiful alien worlds,

intense combat and a whole new band of teammates with whom to explore the outer reaches. If your old pal Quartermann can give you a bit of relationship advice, though, keep at least one eye on your second in command Cora Harper. Why, you ask? Well, do you remember who just so happened to have that same last name? Perhaps a friend-turnedfoe by the name of Jack Harper — AKA the Illusive Man, Could Cerberus be behind the Andromeda Initiative? Let's just say that should you be out on a date with Corad and she asks you out of the blue what your favorite Martin Sheen movie is, run ... Finally, could a simple survey have given us a hint to a new mode that The Division may be getting in the near future — not to mention hinting at a seguel? The first question for fans of the game was how interested they would be in seeing a Last Man Standing-style mode for Survival, which was likened to movies such as Bottle Royole and Hunger Gomes. (Answer: Yes, please!) More interesting, however, was the final question. Participants were asked where they wanted to see the franchise go in the future, with the options being: a new city that continues the same narrative as The Division: a return to New York City to directly continue The Division's story; a new city set in a time that runs concurrent to the events of The Division; or a new city set in a different time period from The Division. Those sure sound like ideas too big to add to the current game and more like feelers for what to do in the next chapter...



GAME TODAY!

APPLE, THE APPLE LOGO, IPAD, AND IPHONE ARE TRADEMARKS OF APPLE INC.

REGISTEREO IN THE U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES. APP STORE IS A SERVICE MARK OF APPLE INC. GOOGLE PLAY IS A TRADEMARK OF GOOGLE ING. LAUNCH OAY AND THE LAUNCH DAY LOGD ARE TRADEMARKS OF EGM MEDIA, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Google Play

App Store





HOW SIS DIGITAL DOWNLOAD WORKS

Select

Select a digital download card from the latest participating game titles available on the Xbox One and PlayStation 4...

Purchase

Purchase your digital download card at the register...



Keep your receipt and locate the download code printed at the bottom...



CODE

ENTER (

Redeem

Redeem the code printed on your receipt in your game console to download (when available) and then Play First without returning to the store!



THE MASTER OF STEALTH IS BACK!



STYX RETURNS IN A NEW STEALTH ADVENTURE!

Explore and master huge, open environments as Styx, alone or In co-op with a friend.

Assassinate or sneak past enemies - from humans, Elves, and Dwarves to much more fearsome, colossal creatures – and experiment with a new array of lethal abilities and weapons in your goblin assassin's arsenal.

Earn and spend points to better assassinate, Infiltrate, perform magic, and gain invaluable skills and abilities.

Explore, recover valuable artifacts and ingredients to craft deadly traps and useful items... even create clones of yourself to deceive your enemies!



COMING MARCH 2017







Blood and Gore Intense Violence Sexual Themes Strong Language

WWW.STYX-GAME.COM























HALO WARS 2

CLAY JENSEN, DESIGN DIRECTOR, 343 INDUSTRIES

"Halo Wars 2 is a real-time strategy game takes place 28 years after the end of the first Halo Wars and just after the events of Halo 5: Guardians. The crew of the Spirit of Fire, who had been in cryogenic suspension, awaken to find themselves at the Ark, and facing a new and dangerous enemy in the Banished, a Brute faction who have broken away from the Covenant and now threaten to gain control of the most powerful weapon ever created. Because of the advances since the last Halo Wars, we've had the opportunity to refine and improve everything in the game. While we were careful to preserve the feel of the original game, there are more units, an armory of new Leader Powers, an epic campaign story, and a much wider range of game modes, including Blitz mode, which combines fierce, real-time battles with a collectible card game."

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER MICROSOFT STUDIOS
DEVELOPER CREATIVE ASSEMBLY/
343 INDUSTRIES
PLATFORMS XBOX ONE, PC
RELEASE DATE 2.21.17



S PCRE



PRE-ORDER NOW **GET CONTENT VALUED UP TO \$2999** INCLUDES:

THE GAME + SEASON PASS











Blood and Gore Drug Reference Intense Violence Sexual Themes











HORIZON ZERO DAWN

MATHIJS DE JONGE, GAME DIRECTOR, GUERRILLA GAMES

"Horizon Zero Dawn is an open world, action-RPG set on Earth, far in the future. Nature has reclaimed the ruins of our forgotten civilization, but humanity lives on in primitive tribes. In this new wilderness, they fight for survival against the machines, fearsome mechanical creatures of unknown origin. You play as Aloy, a fierce hunter who sets out into this beautiful yet treacherous world to find out who her parents were and why she was cast out by her tribe. You will explore, meet new tribes, strengthen and customize Aloy along the way, and take part in exhilarating tactical combat against a variety of enemies. Horizon Zero Dawn is a true hybrid between the action/adventure and RPG genres. Combat is real-time, and supports a range of strategic options, while the world features an RPG-like quest system, a skill tree, various crafting systems, and interactive dialog that creates more realistic conversations."

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER SCEA
OEVELOPER GUERRILLA GAMES
PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 4
RELEASE DATE 2.28.17



THE LEGEND OF

SWITCH&PLAY

ALSO AVAILABLE ON



Fantasy Violence Mild Suggestive Themes Use of Alcohol



RESIDENT EVIL 7 BIOHAZARD

TIM TURI, ASSOCIATE BRAND MANAGER, CAPCOM

"Resident Evil 7 biohazard is a first-person survival horror game. Players explore the derelict, mysterious Baker mansion, and the brutal family members stalk its hallways, searching for you with ill intent. So your mission, simply put, is to escape alive. It's most similar to the original Resident Evil. While such weapons as knives, handguns and shotguns are at your disposal, you have to be careful because ammunition and healing items are scarce, which means you have to make every shot count, and run for your life when you can. But the key difference between Resident Evil 7 and the original is that it's played in first-person, which delivers the most immersive and visceral horror experience yet. Seeing the foreboding world of Resident Evil 7 through the eyes of the main character limits your overall perspective of the world, which means you never know what's around the corner ... or right behind you."

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER CAPCOM

DEVELOPER CAPCOM

PLATFORMS PLAYSTATION 4, XBOX ONE, PC

RELEASE DATE 1.24.17

THE WALKING THE TELLTALE SERIES A NEW FRONTIER







AVAILABLE NOW!



⊗XBOXONE. → 754



Blood and Gore Intense Violence Strong Language Use of Drugs



FOR HONOR

GAËLEC SIMARD, ASSOCIATE GAME DIRECTOR, UBISOFT MONTREAL

"For Honor is a brand-new type of game that approaches melee combat in an innovative way. While it contains gameplay elements from shooters, action-adventure games and MOBAs, I guess it can be summarized as an action-fighting game with a raw and personal fighting experience, faithful to the true emotions of melee combat. Through the Art of Battle combat system, you really feel like you're wielding a weapon, as the core of the game really revolves around that face-to-face, visceral dueling experience where every move can make the difference between life and death. In the story mode, Apollyon believes that might makes right, and so she manipulates the three factions — knights, Vikings, and samurai — into fighting each other. While you can play the story alone or online with a friend, For Honor also has five different multiplayer modes that include a Team Death Match-style mode called Skirmish and a two-player face off called Duel."

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER UBISOFT

DEVELOPER UBISOFT MONTREAL/
QUEBEC/TORONTO
PLATFORMS PLAYSTATION 4, XBOX ONE, PC
RELEASE DATE 2.14.17





NIOH

TOM LEE, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, TEAM NINJA

"Nioh is a dark and deadly samurai action role-playing game game set in feudal 16th century Japan. You play as William, a Westerner who lands in Japan and battles his way to ultimately becoming a fearsome samurai. Players engage in combat with both human enemies and supernatural ones called 'Yokai,' which are mythological creatures/demons steeped in Japanese folklore. All the hallmarks of Team Ninja games are evident in Nioh, from the over-the-top action and beautiful graphics to the precise feel of the controls and so on. However, there's a layer of depth and richness in this game that I don't think we have ever explored. There's also a sense of calm and cautiousness as you explore this world, which is fundamentally Japanese in its pacing and presentation. But that contrasts with the wild and furiousness of the combat that awaits you around every corner."

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER SCEA
DEVELOPER TEAM NINJA
PLATFORMS PLAYSTATION 4
RELEASE DATE 2.07.17

4 754

GREATNESS AWAITS

THE SHOW 17

AVAILABLE 3.28.17
Only On PlayStation



Search for more detailed rating summaries at esrb.org



Major League Baseball and Minor League Baseball trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of Major League Baseball Properties, Inc. and MLB Advanced Media, L.P., as applicable. All rights reserved. Visit MLB.com, the Official Site of Major League Baseball The Baseball Hall of Farme and Museum trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of the National Baseball Hall of Farme and Museum trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of the National Baseball Hall of Farme and Museum, Inc., as applicable. Visit the official website of the Hall of Farme at BaseballHall.org. Officially Licensed Product of Major League Baseball Players Association-MLBPA trademarks and copyrighted works, including the MLBPA logo, and other intellectual property rights are owned and/or held by MLBPA and may not be used without MLBPA's written consent. Visit www.MLBPLAYERS.com, the Players Choice on the web. © 2017 Sony Interactive Entertainment America LLC. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks and the "PS" family logo are registered trademarks and the "PS" is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc.



10 SECRETS
of FINAL FANTASY XV

BY PAUL SEMEL

n 1987, Square Enix released a role-playing game called *Final Fantasy*. But the title was a lie: This game was not the last adventure as the name implied; it was just the first of many. What other truths have the developers been hiding? To find out, we challenged Hajime Tabata — game director for *Final Fantasy XV*, the latest chapter of these misleadingly titled RPGs — and made him spill everything he knows about this new game.

1

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

When making a game, studios usually break designers into groups. One might be responsible for making multiplayer maps, while another is tasked with devising side quests. But in his email — a necessity because of time zones and translations — about the people who helped make *Final Fantasy XV*, Tabata revealed there was one group of developers called the Food team. And yes, Tabata capitalized the word Food. Apparently, even game characters need to eat.



2

FOOD FIGHTERS

The Food team did more than create sustenance for our beloved Noctis, Ignis, Gladiolus and Prompto, however. "The Food team held a competition, and that's where we got the 'Excellent Oven-Roasted Trout.' It was the most popular recipe at a BBQ done within Business Division 2,"Tabata said. Apparently, even game designers need to eat.



PHISHING SCHEME

As we hope you know, to get the trout that will be excellently roasted in the oven, you must go fishing. Tabata said, however, that fishing in Finol Fontosy XV can accomplish more than that. "You can actually get to a level at which you can defeat Ardyn by just fishing," Tabata said. "If you acquire fishing skills that can benefit you in strategy, you can rake in the AP, gain a fortune from selling the fish you've caught and can raise your level."



J IS FOR JIGGLE PHYSICS

Many years ago, designers behind the *Dead* or *Alive* fighting games boasted that *D.O.A. 2* featured realistic jiggle physics. Tabata said the same is true about *Finol Fontosy XV*. Well, sort of. "The food items incorporate physics, which produces a realistic jiggle," he explained. "Some of that was created through actually making the dishes, though we also shot reference footage of jiggling by shaking and cutting things."

5 HE

HERE COMES THE SUN

The physics of jiggling food isn't the only science that Tabata and his team made sure was realistic in *Finol Fantosy XV*, however. The designers also spent time making sure that the sun's orbit was realistic. "We first started with Tokyo's cycle, but later put it somewhere between Paris and London to create better daylight cycles." he said.

6

DO I NEED TO SOAK THIS?

While it might seem that dirt is dirt, soil scientists and anyone who does laundry know otherwise. Now, we can add *Finol Fontosy XV* game designers to that list. "The dirt and grime on a monster's body differs between what region it is in, such as the desert, or swamp. There are different dirt textures prepared for each region, so that the terrain-appropriate one would appear," Tabata explained.

7

ON THE ROAD, AGAIN

When you're not examining the dirt on a monster's booty, checking the position of the sun against the real one or eating food that jiggles, you might be taking a road trip in Finol Fontasy XV. Not surprisingly, Tabata's team also hit the road in real life. "I had the art, map and quest teams go on a few road trips to visit various locations — including caves, waterfalls, mountains, forests, and other locations near Tokyo — that closely resembled what we envisioned for the game," Tabata revealed. "In fact, the scene where Noctis sits on the open car's rear hood is also something someone did on one of these trips."



SMAUG ALERT

Via those road trips, you will explore the game's open world, which Tabata said was inspired by "the overall feel you get from playing Red Deod Redemption." But when it came to Final Fantosy XV's combat, he was influenced by a movie, not a game. "The elf battle sequence from The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smoug became an inspiration for the overall battle flow in-game, how it flows between link attacks as well as offensive and defensive maneuvers." he said.

9

TAKE YOUR KID TO WORK

"During the game's development, we held a company event around Christmas 2015 we called Family Day, where staff could bring their family members to the office," Tabata recalled. Sounds like it could be fun, right? But what Tabata goes on to say about Family Day is that it not only included an arts & crafts area, where the kids got to make cardboard chocobos, but that, "We also let the kids make their own business cards, as a present." Now those kids can enter to win free meals all over town!

10

BIZ DEV DEVOE

While making paper birds and business cards may sound a bit low-tech for a video game company party, Tabata goes on to explain that Family Day did indeed include some game time as well. The employees' children got to play "a special Christmas version of *FFXV*. One minigame involved hitting goblins to take back the Christmas presents they stole, while another was a chocobo race."





MASSEFFECT. ANDROMEDA



MATURE 17+

Blood Partial Nudity Strong Language Strong Sexual Content Violence

Online Interactions Not Rated by the ESRB

*CODE EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2017. DOUNLOADABLE CONTENT REQUIRES MASS EFFECT. ANDROMEDA ON APPLICABLE PLATFORM (SOLD SEPARATELY), OPEN ONLY TO LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE 50 UNITED STATES AND OC, 1 YEARS OR LIMIT FIVE CODE REDIRMTHONS PER DAY, OFFER SUBJECT TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS AT VAVALUTINOSMASSEFFECT.COM.

UNLOCK A MULTIPLAYER BOOSTER PACK*





WHEN YOU PURCHASE SPECIALLY MARKED PACKAGES OF TOTINO'S PIZZA ROLLS OR PARTY PIZZA PACK

AVAILABLE 03.21.17







NINTENDO SWITCH REVEAL

TIME TO SWITCH THINGS UP

BY RAY CARSILLO

t was the kind of cold, blustery wintery day you'd expect from New York City in the middle of January, But escaping the elements wasn't why a few dozen journalists happily crammed through the small, indiscreet doorway of an event space in Midtown Manhattan. No, beyond this door was the Nintendo Switch, being shown to us — and giving us hands-on experience —for the first time.

The buzz was palpable in the room. Just a dozen hours earlier, executives and developers showed Nintendo's newest console on a stage in Japan. Now, here we were, getting a chance to play much of what we had seen.

While some journalists were a tad overwhelmed by the display — or sadly out of breath from the two flights of stairs — we WGC correspondents came in with a gameplan: We would move from the most important games to least. That meant heading to The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild first. Our strategy was rewarded, as we got some of the

first seats available on the newest Hyrulian adventure. But our focus here would center on the system itself.

We began by playing with the Switch in its docking bay, the game itself on a beautiful flat screen TV. In our hands was the Switch's "puppy dog" controller configuration; both Joy-cons were resting in the grip that comes with the system, Voltron-ing its way into a controller that looks like something you'd get on another new-gen system. With amazing ease — just clicking a single button and sliding them off — you could do away with the grip and hold each Joy-con separately, much like a Wiimote and Nunchuck, but minus the connecting cord. For an adult

man, this configuration took some getting used to. The Joy-cons are almost alarmingly tiny when separated from a grip or the system itself, but they were completely responsive.

When we needed to connect the Joy-cons to something heavier, we were advised to take the Switch console out of its dock for the first time. Simply taking the console with us, picking up and playing our games on the go is this system's grand gimmick. With the same ease as it was to take the Joy-cons out of the grip, they clicked into place on either side of the console. As we lifted the tablet-looking device out, the flatscreen went black, and the 6.7S-inch screen in our hands popped to life with no signal loss from one device to the other. Although the picture quality dropped some (the tablet maxes at 720p), the game was no less enjoyable. And now I could take it wherever I wanted.



It may have been a simple mechanic, but it hooked us. The freedom to play console-quality games on the go is something many players have longed for. Now, it was here, and the transition from home console to portable console was smooth and as simple.

We quickly placed the tablet back in its dock and made our way around the room to other games. We played *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* with the kickstand. With several journalists gathered around, each with a single Joy-con controller in hand, we raced around new tracks. 1-2 *Switch* was the first game to take advantage of the HD Rumble, something we laughed at during the earlier presentation. But using it, feeling as though multiple marbles were rolling around inside our Joy-cons, makes us excited for what other games might take advantage of this feature.

Core games such as Splatoon 2 and Ultra Street Fighter II: The Final Challengers were comfortable using either the Joy-cons or the Pro Controller. Games such as ARMS felt like Wii throwbacks as we wildly flailed about with a Joy-con in each hand, throwing phantom punches and trying to knock out opponents playing right next to us.

In no time, our several hours with the Switch were over. We played a cornucopia of games in a variety of genres from a multitude of developers and publishers. Publishers' support for the Switch was displayed in full force, which is a huge plus. It may not be the most powerful system on the market, but the portability and convenience of the Switch — coupled with Nintendo's illustrious first-party properties — will make every gamer want this in their collection. We know we already want it in ours.



FOCUS

LEGEND OF ZELDA:
BREATH OF THE WILD

BREATH OF FRESH AIR

After years of players' anticipation, The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild is the big-ticket item coming on launch day for the Switch. Just as Twilight Princess was both the swan song for the Gamecube and the launching point for the Wii, Nintendo is hoping to replicate that success as it retires the Wii U and kicks off the Switch.

The demo was the same as we played at E3 last year—the first 20 minutes of the game—but obviously on the Switch instead of the Wii U. From a technical standpoint, the experience felt much smoother. It's hard to tell if this is from an increase in power or because Nintendo had six more months to iron out framerate issues and bugs. The game's graphics also look better, although we probably can chalk it up to the Swtich's beefier specs. Of course, we also played it on the tablet. Even though the visuals drop to 720p, Breath of the Wild still played well. More than anything, the thought of playing this Zelda game on the go already has us sold.







THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT LIST

IT'S DANGEROUS TO GO ALONE

As the history of Nintendo consoles shows, third-party support can make or break your hardware. Luckily, Nintendo already has a slew of big names jumping on the Switch train in the system's release window. Here are six of our favorites.



Ultra Street Fighter II:The Final Challengers

DEVELOPER CAPCOM
PUBLISHER CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE TBD 2017

Street Fighter II on the SNES revolutionized the fighting game market. The Turbo and Super editions added more fighters and set Capcom down their path of constantly tweaking their fighting games each console generation. Now, they are dusting off what some still argue is the best fighting game ever, adding two new characters and brand new sprites with art from UDON to show that some games do only get better with age.

Super Bomberman R

DEVELOPER KONAMI PUBLISHER KONAMI RELEASE DATE MARCH 3



Super Bomberman R returns the series to Nintendo consoles with a blast. This throwback to the glory days of Bomberman shows off the multiplayer potential of the Switch: As many as eight Switch consoles can to link up. It also features a deep campaign with a new story that takes advantage of all the Switch's controller options.

FIFA 18

DEVELOPER EA CANADA PUBLISHER EA SPORTS RELEASE DATE FALL 2017

Sports games have been absent on Nintendo systems for going on three years, but EA Sports is ready to dip their toes back into the Big N's waters by announcing the next *FIFA* will come to the Switch. If it does well, it could be a sign for *Madden* and *NHL* to eventually return, too, but seeing the world's game on a Nintendo system broadens the system's appeal.





Sonic Mania

DEVELOPER HEADCANNON/PAGOOAWEST GAMES PUBLISHER SEGA RELEASE DATE SPRING 2017

For those of us old enough to remember the original console wars, seeing Sonic on a Nintendo system still feels a little weird. We're happy that the blue blur will be kicking things off right on the Switch with this throwback to those original Sonic adventures that gave Mario a run for his money. With only one Joy-con, you can emulate days gone by as Sonic needs just a couple of buttons to run, jump and dash his way through both new and re-imagined worlds on his quest to stop the evil Dr. Eggman.



Just Dance 2017

DEVELOPER UBISOFT PRIS
PUBLISHER UBISOFT
RELEASE DATE MARCH 3

One of Nintendo's most popular and most consistent third-party supporters, Ubisoft, was more than happy to port its most recent iteration of the massive *Just Dance* franchise. Much as you did with the Wii versions, players hold the Joy-cons in their hands as they move to the groove and rack up scores based on their accuracy. Just remember those wrist straps!



Skylanders Imaginators

DEVELOPER TOYS FOR BOB PUBLISHER ACTIVISION RELEASE DATE MARCH 3

Although it's just a port of a game series known for being on every system, Activision's support of the new Nintendo hardware is good sign. Skylanders will be just as easy to play on the Nintendo Switch as any other system, and comes with new levels and figures to boot.





COMING SOON

Comic Mischief

Wester of the LEGO group. On TT Games d. Produced by TT Games under ligense from the LEGO group, LEGO, the LEGO logo, the Brick and Knob configurations and the Ministry are training to the LEGO group. The LEGO group, The PS' tamily logo and "PS3" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. I logos are trademarks of the same company. KINECT, Xbox, Xbox 350, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies an user under Icanse from Microsoft. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

ACCESSORIES LIST

DRESSING UP YOUR SWITCH

The Switch console will come pretty loaded with a standard controller grip, a pair of Joy-cons and the system itself. But if you're preparing for any possible gaming situation that may arise, here are some accessories you can get on day one.



Joy-Con Controller Yes, the system already comes with a pair of Joy-cons, and just handing one to a friend will allow you to both play many two-player games. But some games, such as *ARMS*, require each player to have a pair of Joy-cons. In that case, having an extra pair lying around, especially if they are a different color yours, could be a good idea.



Joy-Con Straps The Joy-con straps make the Joy-cons a little larger and their shoulder buttons a little easier to press for those of us with larger hands. But they also include those familiar wrist-straps introduced with Wiimotes. The last thing anyone wants to do is break a Joy-con by having it accidentally fly out of your hands.



Joy-Con Charging Grip The system comes with a grip that creates the popular "puppy dog" configuration. However, this extra grip charges your Joy-Cons' batteries while you play. Never again will you lose a second of game time because you forgot to put your Joy-Cons back on the console.

Joy-Con Wheel Intended for release with *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*, the Joy-Con Wheel holds the Joy-Con so you can control your vehicle. You can drive around the track more naturally with motion controls, and still have easy access to buttons when necessary.



Joy-Con Charging Dock If you plan to get extra Joy-Cons, charging multiple sets at once could be beneficial. Able to charge two pairs of Joy-Cons at once, this extra docking bay will always keep the built-in batteries fresh.



Pro Controller A must-have item for every core gamer. Likely the most comfortable pro controller we've ever seen, the Switch features all the joysticks, face and shoulder buttons, and D-pads you would ever need. It's perfect for those shooter and fighting game fans out there.



Available in the

Video Game Aisle

GRAVE CLOBBER



EVERYONE 10-Cartoon Violence Comic Mischief

Online Interactions Not Rated by the ESRB

WWW.SKYLANDERS.COM

AXBOXONE AXBOX360 WILL TENDO

© 2017 Activision Publishing, Inc. ACTIVISION, SKYLANDERS and SKYLANDERS IMAGINATORS are trademarks of Activision Publishing, Inc. The rating icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.

COVER STORY

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER EA

OEVELOPER BIOWARE

PLATFORMS PLAYSTATION 4, XBOX ONE, PC

RELEASE DATE 03 21 17

MASS EFFECT: ANDROMEDA

BY MATT BUCHHOLTZ

A NEW ADVENTURE AWAITS

atapulted into deep space, far away from the past adventures of Cmdr.
Shepard, Mass Effect: Andromeda delivers new challenges for new and experienced players alike. The upcoming installment of the intergalactic roleplaying game franchise has big shoes to fill, but after talking with Andromeda producer Michael Gamble, we're more excited than ever to get our hands on the title. "The challenge is to bring Mass Effect into something new, something fresh," Gamble said. "To have a new start in the franchise, but still pay homage to all the previous things that we've built."

By taking the player from a familiar galaxy to a more alien location, the developer created a bevy of exciting experiences. "One of the driving factors to making that change was ... bringing it away from the Milky Way species, bringing it away from Shepard and his story, but still having people originate in the Milky Way," Gamble said. "So, salarians, asari, cool spaceships, the Human Alliance — all that kind of stuff we get to bring forward. At the same time, in coming to Andromeda everything is new. It's a fresh slate: new enemies, new friends, all that kind of stuff."

BioWare endeavored to bring a sense of exploration back to the series by taking Andromeda outside of the Milky Way. While exploring the depths of space was huge in the original game, the more intricate storylines in subsequent Mass Effect titles required players to focus their attention to the core story.





Crew Squad Goals

As the Pathfinder, you lead the crew of the Tempest is an adventurous group. Take a look at some of the characters who will be standing by your side:

Liam Liam may be ex-security, but now is fairly laid back. When you want an honest opinion, he's the one who will teil it to you straight.



Cora Cora, a biotic, acts as your second in command on the Tempest. Years of working with asari commandos have sharpened her combat skills.



Peebee An asari, Peebee is described as very fun and playful, but she is very concerned about the secrets of the Rend.



Vetra A female turian who is all about logistics and operations, Vetra has a sister she cares deeply about in the suster.



Drack Drack is an experienced warrior. He also is one of the oldest, most grizzled Krograns that fans of the series will have ever encountered.



"If you made an important decision and you were casual about it, you'll have different reactions and different responses from characters than if you made it with a heavy heart."

MICHAEL GAMBLE, ANDROMEDA PRODUCER



FEATURE

"Those large, explorable planets are one of my favorite things that we brought to *Andromeda.*"

MICHAEL GAMBLE, ANDROMEDA PRODUCER

"We couldn't really bring in a lot of the wide exploration stuff in that we saw in Mass Effect 1," Gamble said regarding Mass Effect 2 and 3. "But in Andromeda, we've really doubled down on that. So you have these massive planets to explore — drive around, do amazing sidequests, build up your character relationships, and build up the geo-political environment and story in the game. Those large, explorable planets are one of my favorite things that we brought to Andromeda."

Traveling to these new planets, players step into the shoes of one of two siblings, Scott or Sarah Ryder. While the fundamental storyline will be the same no matter which Ryder you pick, each features character-specific dialogue responses. Andromeda's overhauled dialogue system adds more depth to the game, as it allows players to choose from Casual, Profes-

sional, Heart and Head systems.

"The dialogue system that we've created allows you to take different tones and reflect your personal kind of roleplaying experience a little bit more in the choices that you plck," Gamble said. "Generally, we try to create responses to your tone to reflect what you say In the conversation more than just having a good or bad dichotomy."

Gamers want to keep in mind, however, that their choices will have consequences down the line. Inhabitants of the Andromeda galaxy won't soon forget your actions.

"If you made an important decision and you were casual about it, you'll have different reactions and different responses from characters than if you made it with a heavy heart," warned Gamble.

Just as the dialogue was revamped, Mass Ef-



Dangerous Planets

Hazardous to your healthbar

Space travel in real life isn't a safe endeavor. and it's no different in Andromeda. While some planets may feature beautiful foliage and friendly inhabitants, others could be fatal to those foolish enough to step foot on them. In your search for adventure and crafting materials, you'll want to make sure to always look before you leap.

"We have this really elegant system of hazards on these planets," Gamble said. "Tier 3 hazards are very, very hard to get through; you'd have to be extremely adept at gameplay and movement."

Or you could just wait until you've leveled up your Nomad and your character with the proper resistances.

ADVERTISEMENT

HOT HARDWARE

TURTLE BEACH® PX24 GAMING HEADSET

PS4™ Pro, PS4™, Xbox One, PC,

Mobile Get the competitive advantage with SUPERHU-MAN HEARING™ on the Turtle Beach® PX24



You'll now hear subtle in-game sounds you might have otherwise missed - audio based intelligence enabling you to make split second decisions which can be the difference between winning and losing. The PX24 also features the Turtle Beach® SuperAmp™ in-line amplifier, large 50mm over-ear speakers, Virtual Surround Sound, Variable Bass Boost, Variable Mic Monitoring, and multi-platform compatibility.



SONY DUALSHOCK 4

The DualShock®4 Wireless Controller for PlayStation®4 defines this generation of play, combining revolutionary features and comfort with intuitive, precision controls. Improved analog sticks and trigger buttons allow for unparalleled accuracy with every move while innovative technologies offer exciting ways to experience your games and share your greatest moments.

CALL OF DUTY: INFINITE WARFARE **PLAYSTATION 4** BUNDLE

The Call of Duty®: Infinite Warfare PlayStation® 4 bundle is the ultimate entertainment package, with 2-games-in-1: Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare and Call of Duty: Modern Warfare Remastered.



TURTLE BEACH® RECON 50P GAMING HEADSET

PS4™ Pro, PS4™, Xbox One, PC, Mobile

Take gaming audio and comfort to the next level with the Turtle Beach® Recon 50P multiplatform gaming headset, featuring a lightweight, comfortable design, and large 40mm over-ear speakers that let you hear every crisp high and thundering low. The convenient in-line controls allow you to quickly and easily adjust Master Volume and Mic Mute, and the high sensitivity adjustable boom mic can be removed when watching movies or listening to music.

Strike Team Missions

Going on Strike

Multiplayer in Mass Effect: Andromeda comes in the form of Strike Team missions. By using the Strike Team Terminal on the Tempest (or choosing multiplayer from the Main Menu), gamers can join up with friends or play asynchronously.

"The amount of rewards and the type of rewards will change whether you choose to do it asynchronously or synchronously," Gamble said.

While some rewards from multiplayer will carry over to single player, multiplayer is not required to achieve any sort of "best ending" or alternate story options within *Andromeda*.

"[Gamers] won't have to play mulitplayer for any other reason than to just have a great time with your friends and to earn some rewards by doing it," Gamble said.

Don't think Mass Effect will go easy on you, though. BioWare has promised that the AI is smarter than ever. Apparently, you won't be able to hide during the entire match anymore.

fect: Andromeda offers new combat and leveling systems. Gamers will choose different builds of powers called Profiles to adapt and handle different situations. Pick a profile with lots of armor to take down waves of foes, or swap to a stealthier profile to sneak past the enemies. No longer will you have to pick one class and stick with it through the entire game; instead, you'll be able to re-specialize (for a cost).

"You have to, through hard work and progression, unlock powers and skills," Gamble said. "But, the cool thing is, once you've unlocked them, you can unlock these things called Profiles, which give you different benefits and buffs and power loadout sets. In effect, we're allowing you to customize your moment-to-moment gameplay experience."

In addition to classic Profiles such as

Vanguard, Infiltrator and Engineer, players can create their own Profiles using the Favorites feature. That means you can pair powers and skills such as the Vanguard Charge, Flak Cannon, and Incinerate together to make your own devastating Profile that perfectly fits your unique play style.

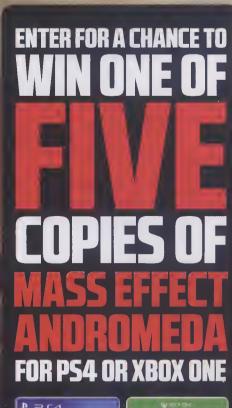
The inclusion of a crafting system within Andromeda also contributes to the ability to experience the game the way you want. By mining materials, players can craft anything from melee weapons, like a krogan-style hammer, to incredibly powerful sniper rifles. Even the omni-blade that you start with can be upgraded. The opportunities are endless!

With its many new features, it's no surprise that we're counting the days to Mass Effect:

Andromeda's release on March 2.

"You have to, through hard work and progression, unlock powers and skills."

MICHAEL GAMBLE, ANDROMEDA PRODUCER







TO ENTER, GO TO WWW.EGMNOW.COM/WGC47 AND COMPLETE OUR READER SURVEY. BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND E-MAIL FOR A CHANCE TO WIN!

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN, VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. Open only to legal U.S. residents. Contest begins February 25, 2017, and ends March 30, 2017. Odds of winning depend on number of eligible entries received. For entry and official rules with complete entry, eligibility, prize, and other details go to www.egmnow. com/contests. Prizes supplied by Electronic Arts. © 2016 Electronic Arts Inc. EA, the EA logo, Mass Effect, Mass Effect: Andromeda, BioWare and the BioWare logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks and the "PS4" logo is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc. "Greatness Awaits" is a registered trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment America LLC.



BY EMM . *CHAFTE

he Switch could hardly be a Nintendo console without some version of a Mario Kart game, and Mario Kart 8 Deluxe is racing to deliver. As the name implies, Mario Kart 8 Deluxe draws most of its content from Mario Kart 8, but brings plenty of extra surprises of its own.

Perhaps the biggest change coming with the enhanced port is the nature of *how* you'll play the game. Thanks to the Switch's portability, players can take *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* with them. The game supports up to eight friends on local multiplayer, so you'll be able to hand a friend one Joy-Con Controller to 1v1 on the same Switch, or tell everyone to bring their own consoles for an easy meet-up. If meeting up in

person isn't an option, hook up the Switch to your TV's dock to play at full 1080p resolution at 60 frames per second, and race down some 12-person multiplayer online courses.

With those friends, you'll be able to get a good look at the new content *Delux*e brings to the party. In the regular racing mode, you can play with five new characters (King Boo, Dry Bones, Bowser Jr., Inkling Girl and Inkling Boy), three new vehicles (two inspired by *Splatoon*), and two new items (the item-stealing Boo in race mode and the jump-granting Feather in battle mode). You'll also be able to carry two items at once to boost yourself or slow your competitors. Finally, another new feature,

Smart Steering, will let even the youngest kids and siblings get in on the fun by keeping their karts from falling off track; it's the kart-racing equivalent of bumper bowling.

The biggest change, though, comes in the complete overhaul to Battle Mode. *Deluxe* makes a return to the series' roots with the

Thanks to the Switch's portability, players can take Mario Kart 8 Deluxe with them.



MEET THE RACERS

You'll be able to choose from 41 characters in *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* — five of them unique to this Switch version. Here's a look at the new characters you can send racing down the tracks.

KING BOO



Returning from Mario Kart: Double Dash!! And Mario Kart Wii, the King of all Boos stars as a heavyweight character,

despite his incorporeal nature. (He carries it all in the crown.)

DRY BONES



Another returning character, Dry Bones is the skeletal version of Koopa Troopa, adding some ghastly appeal to the lightweight class.

BOWSER JR.



The son of Mario's worst enemy, Bowser Jr.'s got the spiky shell and angry eyebrows bequeathed by his

lineage. Unfortunately, the intimidating effect is a offset by the cute little ponytall and blb.

INKLING GIRL AND INKLING BOY



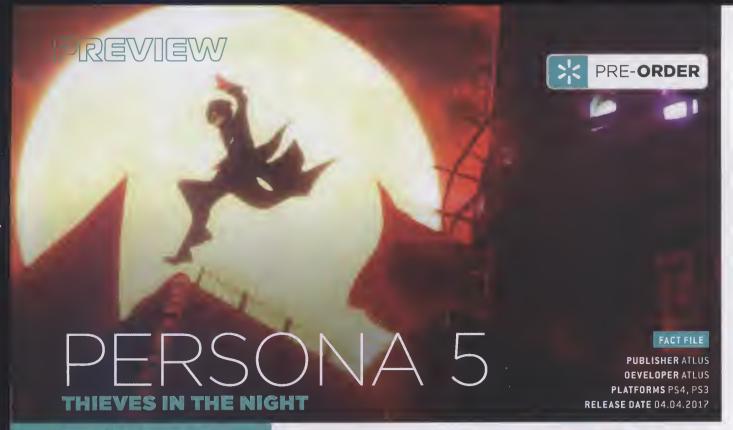
Two separate characters, the Inklings make their *Mario*, *Kart* debut in a splash of color and with multiple color

palettes. Both come prepared to win with their own splatter guns, and might even swap into their squid forms when performing a trick.

addition of Balloon Battle and Bob-Omb Blast modes. In the revamped Balloon Battle mode, your aim is to keep all your balloons intact while popping your opponents' balloons. Unlike past versions of this mode, when you lose all your balloons, you won't be eliminated — but your score will be cut in half. The chaos is upped in Bob-Omb Blast, where all players must race around the map to collect bombs to hurl at their opponents.

Nintendo's hinted at the appearance of future modes, including possible Coin, Shine and Piranha Plant modes, so you might have even more content on *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* when it reaches the checkered flag on April 28. ©





BY MOLLIE L PATTERSON

fter a number of delays from its original 2014 release date, Atlus' epic new Shadow-slaying RPG Persona 5 is finally almost here. Even better, it's looking as though the wait definitely will have been worth it.

One of the bigger changes *Persona* fans will find are Palaces, themed labyrinths that tie in directly to what's going on in the story. In *Persona 4* and its predecessor, dungeons had an overall theme, but they were more generic in design because their floors were randomly generated. *Persona 5*'s Palaces, meanwhile, have rooms and halls specifically crafted to challenge players in ways both new and old. For players who liked that uncertainty in exploration, a separate set of side dungeons that are dynamically designed will await them.

Of course, in the recent chapters of the *Persona* saga, just as important as fighting the monstrous Shadows that lurked in the dungeons' depths was getting to know people in the real world through Social Links. In *Persona 5*, forming relationships with others is now focused into the idea of Confidants. Confidants are people whose positions in life can aid you and your team, so getting to know them while building mutual trust will be one key to success. Don't worry, though: The process still includes finding friends to turn into potential sweethearts.

Persona 5 is scheduled to summons itself on PlayStation 4 and PlayStation3 on April 4. ©







INJUSTICE 2

COMIC BOOK GOODNESS IN A GREAT FIGHTING GAME

BY MARC CAMRON

adaptations are still fairly rare, particularly if they feature multiple playable characters. When each character has a unique set of powers, programming them becomes complicated quite quickly.

Players loved the original *Injustice: Gods*Among *Us* for exactly that reason. The game's exploration into the DC Universe brought heroes and villains together in a battle royal. Thanks to some creative writing, the story makes complete sense as long as you buy into DC's parallel universes.

For the series' return, developer NeverRealm Studios wanted to make everything bigger and better. More fighters, higher stakes and a new progression system will keep players coming back for more.

Injustice 2 sports a more diverse and exciting lineup of characters than its predeccesor. Though only 18 of the expected 31 included

fighters have been announced, the roster is filled with new faces. New heroes such as Black Canary, Blue Beetle and Supergirl make great additions, but the addition of a veritable who's who of villains really rounds things out. Atrocitus, Bane, Deadshot, Gorilla Grodd, Poison Ivy and mastermind Brainiac have all come to challenge the side of (maybe) right. Fans who pre-order can even get famed Jack Kirby creation Darkseid as a bonus.

Though the game plays much like the original, complete with awesome interactive environments, NeatherRealm added a new Gear System. Now, after each round in the campaign, character-specific loot drops to let players customize and personalize their fighters. Similar to how RPGs work, this character development will draw gamers deeper into the game's story mode.

Finally, there's the story. Set five years

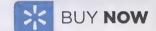
after the first game, Batman and his group are still trying to restore order after vanquishing Superman and his despotic vision of society. When a new threat led by the villainous Brainiac arises, the Dark Knight must once again try to hold the world together.

At its heart, Injustice 2 is another great-looking fighting game from the team behind Mortal Kombat. The story, though, is pure comic book goodness. So get your thumbs in shape, May 16 is right around the corner. ©









UNCENSORED EVALUATIONS FROM THE GAMECENTER EXPERTS



RESIDENT EVIL 7 BIOHAZARD

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?

BY MARC CAMRON

ome people love being scared: watching a horror movie, visiting a haunted house or riding the most extreme roller coaster. That rush of adrenaline makes your heart pound and palms sweat, and makes these adventurers feel alive.

The early Resident Evil games perfectly exemplified the survival-horror genre, defining many tropes that remain today. But somehow, the series lost its way. Resident Evil 5 and 6 were glorified action games that had little to do with earlier entries, save for a few familiar characters.

For *Resident Evil 7*, Capcom wanted to return to the franchise's roots and bring back the horror. Happily — if that word applies to

a game of this nature — the developers were more successful than fans could have hoped.

The setting harkens back to the first Resident Evil game. The Dulvey Plantation reminds players of a foreboding haunted house and the claustrophobia that comes with it. Here you'll encounter the Baker family, a twisted, malevolent freak show that suggests films such as The Texas Chainsaw Massacre and The Hills Have Eyes. You'll have to fight and/or elude the family, solve the mystery of your missing girlfriend and survive.

Instead of the familiar third-person viewpoint, *RE 7* features a first-person view, truly immersing players in the story. You'll hear a threat behind

you before you see it, giving you less time to react and a more tense encounter. These sensations are magnified if you play on PS4 in VR. You read that right: The whole game is playable on the PSVR, and the experience is nothing short of harrowing. Every encounter feels more intense, every fight more urgent.

Regardless of how you choose to play, *RE* 7 offers a compelling story, gameplay filled with logical and occasionally tricky puzzles and enough blood-soaked horror to satiate even the most hardcore fan. It is a fine return to form for the series. True horror fans should definitely take the time to uncover the mysteries that lurk within. ©

www.MyLaunchDay.com



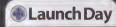












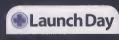
































STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR **FAVORITE GAMES** WITH INFO & OFFERS DELIVERED TO YOUR PHONE **24/7!**

FEATURES INCLUDE:

Countdown Clock News Updates Video Playing Tips Community Special Giveaways

DOWNLOAD THE APP FOR YOUR FAVORITE GAME TODAY!

AVAILABLE MOXXX





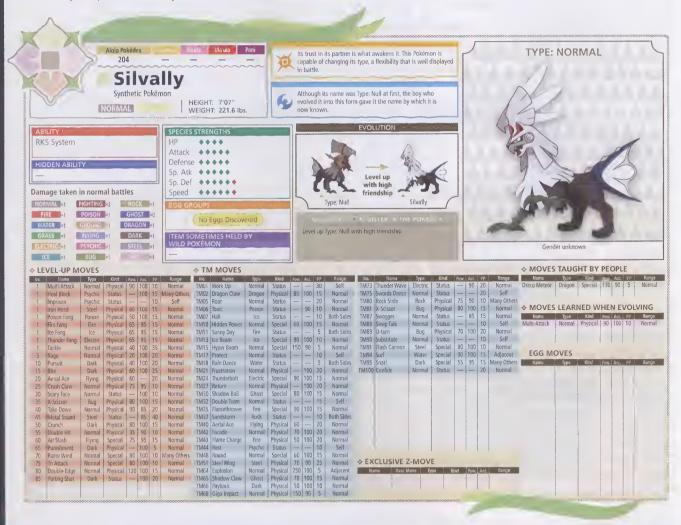
Pokémon Sun & Pokémon Moon Pokédex™

N BROUGHT TO YOU BY PRIMA GAMES

If getting all the Pokémon from the Alola region is your goal, or if you simply want the latest info on all these amazing Pokémon, then Pokémon Sun & Pokémon Moon: The Official Alola Region Pokédex & Postgame Adventure Guide will be your go-to for the info you need!

And if you think you've done everything there is to do in the Alola region, then think again! Many adventures are waiting for you after you've completed the main story in Pokémon Sun and Pokémon Moon, and this guide will take you through them—including encountering, battling, and catching the mysterious Ultra Beasts!

Here is a guick peek at what you will find inside!





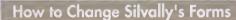




STRATEGY CENTER

PRESENTED BY





Silvally changes forms using a special set of memory drives that Gladion will give you after you become a Champion. Give Silvally a memory drive matching the type that you want it to become. It will remain in that form unless you give it a different item.





































Obtain Pokémon That Only Evolve When Friendly

Pokémon come to trust their Trainers and become friendly toward them with time. There are some Pokémon that evolve when they level up after they have grown sufficiently friendly toward you. Friendship increases when Pokémon feel happy. But if you do things that make your Pokémon unhappy, like causing them to faint in battle, then they will feel less friendly toward you.



- Main ways to make Pokémon friendly toward you
- Have them take part in battles against powerful Trainers, like captains and kahunas

 Use items to raise their base stats, like HP Ups, Proteins, or Irons
- Use items on them during battles, like X Attacks, X Speeds, or Dire Hits
- Give them Berries that increase friendship, like Pomeg Berries or Kelpsy Berries
- Treat them to a lomi-lomi massage in Konikoni City (Akala Island)

- Have them hold a Soothe Bell
- 7 Catch them in Luxury Balls
- 8 Catch them in a Friend Ball (which maximizes their friendship once they are caught)
- Put them in the hot springs on Poké Pelago's Isle Avue
- Use the Friendship Café or Friendship Parlor food stalls in Festival Plaza
- Pokémon in the Alola Pokédex that evolve when they are friendly







Obtain Pokémon That Only Evolve in Special Places

Among the many Pokémon species, you will also find some that evolve only when leveled up in a specific location. Put these Pokémon in your party and visit the locations listed below, then have them level up and they will evolve. You can have your Pokémon level up by battling or catching wild Pokémon in these locations.

Pokémon in the Alola Pokédex that evolve when leveled up in particular locations



©2017 Pokémon. ©1995–2017 Nintendo / Creatures Inc. / GAME FREAK inc. Pokémon, Pokémon character names, and Nintendo 3DS are trademarks of Nintendo.



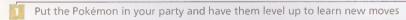




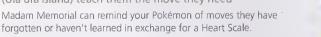
Obtain Pokémon That Only Evolve with Certain Moves

Some Pokémon species only evolve if you have them level up and then learn a particular move, or if you teach them. that move first and then add them to your party to have them level up.

Main ways to teach Pokémon the moves they need to know



Have Madam Memorial in the Mount Lanakila Pokémon Center (Ula'ula Island) teach them the move they need





an affectionate Eevee learn a Fairy-type move first and then level it up

❖ Pokémon in the Alola Pokédex that evolve when they know certain moves

Obtain Pokémon That Only Evolve with Special Stones

There are Pokémon that evolve when you use particular stones on them, thanks to the mysterious power within those stones. There had been nine such stones discovered in the past, but in the Alola region you can also find the Ice Stone—meaning that there are now 10 known Evolution stones! You can pick some of these stones up when walking around in Alola, but if that is all you do, you won't have enough of them to complete the Alola Pokédex. But there are a number of ways to obtain more of these stones than you can simply find in the field. Use all of the methods available to you to get as many stones as you need.





















Pokémon in the Alola Pokédex that evolve when you use stones on them











PARTING SHOTS

DAVID NICHOLSON

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, HALO WARS 2

he original Halo Wars was a cult classic on Xbox 360. Renowned for being the first real-time strategy (RTS) game to translate PC controls well to the console, it opened the genre up to a new audience, backed by the strength of the Halo brand. Now, a new developer is looking to re-ignite this spin-off series, so we sat down with Creative Assembly Executive Producer David Nicholson to see what makes Halo Wars 2 tick.



GUN METAL

WGC: With the original *Halo Wars*, Ensemble pulled off what some called a miracle by making RTS controls that work on a console. What has Creative Assembly done to carry that baton further with *Halo Wars* 2?

David Nicholson: We've looked at what works, what really works, and how people are using those controls and tried to add controls in there. We didn't want to increase the complexity, but we did want to make sure people could get access to the controls that they wanted very easily. So, we talked a little bit about the control groups on the D-pad. That's something people really want to do on an RTS. With mouse/keyboard, it's super-simple: Ctrl-1-10 and you've got 10 different groups. So, we've identified a way to put that onto the D-Pad so you can at least assign four different control groups now on consoles.

"We absolutely want to get more and more people coming in and playing RTS on a console."

WGC: Do you think the control scheme has held back the RTS genre on consoles? Do you think *Halo Wars 2* might grow the genre to a new audience?

DN: That's certainly something we are aiming for. For *Halo Wars 2*, we really like to think of it as the RTS for everyone. We at Creative Assembly, and also 343, all love playing RTSs, and we know what makes them really good fun. And there are some guys who have done them really well on console. But yes, we absolutely want to get more and more people coming in and playing RTS on a console. [With] the combination of the *Halo* franchise and the RTS experience we're delivering, we hope we're going to get more people to come in and find how much fun it is to play an RTS.

WGC: How was working on the *Halo* franchise and playing with it outside of its shooter roots?

DN: It was really good. We developed such a close relationship with 343 and we worked really tight with those guys to make sure all of the art and all of the lore fit into that universe. So, if you already understand and know the *Halo* universe, there will be a lot of things that you'll be familiar with. But we've also built it so if you've not played a *Halo* game, you don't need to have or need to understand the lore, so it should be accessible to new players as well.

WGC: What went into the decision to bring this story up to date with the main franchise timeline, and set it 28 years after the first Halo Wars?

DN: One of the things that people really love about Halo is the story. We wanted to make sure, then, that with *Halo Wars* you could tell a wide story across more events, but keep it in that timeline and keep it relevant. It allowed us an opportunity to bring back some characters [who] have been out of the story for a while and see where they are and what they've been up to.

WGC: Creative Assembly has a long lineage of RTS games, but what other games did you look to for inspiration when it came time to make *Halo Wars 2?*

DN: At Creative Assembly, we've got the *Total War* series, and we looked to that for a ton of inspiration and there's a chunk of guys working on *Halo Wars 2* that came over from *Total War*. But there's a lot that we like and we take inspiration not just from RTS on console, but we also look at games like *Starcraft*, obviously the biggest RTS with the most avid fans. We also look at MOBAs. One of the things we like about those is there's a fairly complicated rule set underneath, with the best in the world can show the incredible depth of strategy and tactics coming together, while still remaining undaunting to most. That's something we've looked at, learned from and tried to apply here.























